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Children's Department Requests More Mental and Behavioral Services

DOVER - The Cabinet Secretary of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Cari DeSantis today presented a budget request for FY06 that would support a System of Care approach to serving children by enhancing Department behavioral and mental health services. The proposed Department budget is \$153,553,100 in total funds.

"The transformation of a 1970s child welfare system to a children's services system that meets the needs of 21st Century children is well under way. Children are safer. Services are more comprehensive. Positive outcomes are more consistent, and very real," Cabinet Secretary DeSantis said. "The System of Care approach builds on best practices, delivers better outcomes for children by improving how they behave and function, and will enable us to better respond to increasing demands for service."

FY06 Budget Enhancements include:

- Behavioral Health Assessments for Children in Foster Care
- Mental Health Intensive Outpatient Treatment for Youth
- Mental Health Day Treatment in Southern Delaware
- Educational services within the Southern Delaware Day Treatment program
- Substance Abuse Program Administrator for Ferris School
- Dental Services for girls and boys at Stevenson House
- Child Psychologist for boys and girls at Stevenson House
- Art Teacher for boys and girls in Secure Care

The Children's Department has undertaken and met a number of challenges that include implementing Governor Minner's Foster Care reform initiatives, creating a Holistic Services team, re-engineering juvenile probation services, developing individual residential treatment homes, extending supports for children leaving Ferris School for Boys, and deploying mental health services more broadly.

"We have been successful for children because we continue to 'Think of the Child First.' These are just five little words that force us to recognize that, at the end of the long arm of bureaucracy, there is a child depending on us," said Cabinet Secretary DeSantis. "Our budget request is an opportunity to invest in the children of the State of Delaware and continue to Think of the Child First."

On any given day, the Children's Department provides services to approximately 8,000 children who have been abused, neglected, are dependent, have mental health or substance problems, and/or have been adjudicated delinquent by the Courts. For more information, please visit <http://www.state.de.us/kids/>.

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